



EMBRACING WEB 2.0 AND SOCIAL MEDIA

A life-changing pathway
for agricultural development actors



“

Web 2.0 and social media have become part of everyday life for most people in the developed world. But they represent a life-changing encounter for many in developing countries.”

**Michael Hailu,
CTA Director**

This booklet is produced by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA). It draws on case studies documented and described by the actors involved assisted by a professional journalist. A commonality among all case studies is the fact that all actors are members of a large community of practice (Web2forDev) dealing with Web 2.0 and social media in the context of agriculture and rural development. Interactions are also maintained with them through a variety of means.

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Web 2.0 for development

ICTs – in particular Web 2.0 and social media – have transformed the way people communicate and interact. This has helped to reduce the ‘digital divide’ between urban and rural areas. It has also enabled rural actors with internet access not only to offer but also to benefit from a range of services that were not previously available.

Farmers are promoting their products on Facebook; extension services are using social media to reach out to their clients; and NGOs are using a range of social media tools to mount advocacy campaigns aimed at influencing policy-makers. Researchers are using online collaboration tools to work on joint publications and young bloggers are using new skills to tag and disseminate online content. Young entrepreneurs are excited by opportunities to develop innovative online services and launch their own start-ups. Technical advisors feel more confident in providing adequate advice when they have better skills for conducting advanced online searches or using alert systems. Educators feel gratified when they can introduce online platforms for enhancing information exchange with their students and fellow colleagues. Various actors along the value chain are exploring new ways of buying or selling farm inputs and agricultural produce.

Web 2.0 and social media have become part of everyday life for most people in the developed world. But they represent a life-changing encounter for many in developing countries. Impact assessment studies CTA conducted in 2011 and 2013 on its Web 2.0 and social media capacity-building activities have shown that adoption rates are very high, and that positive impact occurs at personal, institutional and ultimate beneficiary levels. The study also shows that young women are the most likely to adopt social media following a training course.

In such a rapidly evolving and exciting domain, there is tremendous scope for inducing positive change and for stimulating the development of national policies that support the widespread adoption of Web 2.0 and social media within the agricultural sector.

This publication documents some of the success stories in Web 2.0 and social media that CTA has supported over the years. We are committed to building the capacities of our partners to make better and greater use of ICTs to advance food security and nutrition across the developing world.

Michael Hailu
CTA Director

18 Stories of change

It would be hard to exaggerate the speed at which technological innovation is moving. Web 2.0, social media and M-Apps for agriculture play an increasingly important role in agriculture and rural development policy processes and value chain development.

Web 2.0 and social media allow development actors to link up easily with peers and other stakeholders, strengthen networks, access valuable information, produce and publish their own content and redistribute content released by others.

Over the period 2010–14, in partnership with selected host institutions, CTA supported more than 120 face-to-face training events known as Web 2.0 and social media learning opportunities (LOs) in 37 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Events were either funded by CTA or run in franchise mode (with CTA support and branding). Training was given to more than 3,500 individuals.

CTA also partnered with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to offer distance-learning courses on social media for development to selected staff from host institutions and CTA key partner organisations. Other Web 2.0 customised training workshops were organised as part of the Agriculture, Rural Development and Youth in the Information Society (ARDYIS) project. The training of trainers approach was central to activities over the period 2012–2014, with a focus on setting up national and regional training hubs. In 2013, a new business model

was tested, aimed at ensuring the repeated delivery of the curriculum by the host institutions in franchised mode.

Regular monitoring and external impact assessments conducted in 2011 (for 2008–2010) and 2013 (2011–2012), and event-specific evaluations done for the distance-learning courses yielded extremely positive results. “Many people have told us that the training sessions have not only changed their working behaviour, but their whole lives,” said Giacomo Rambaldi, Senior Programme Coordinator at CTA.

In 2013, the Web 2.0 and social media LOs earned the prestigious WSIS 2013 Project Prize in the e-Agriculture category.

Featuring a range of examples from ACP countries, this booklet includes testimonies on how Web 2.0 and social media have contributed to policy dialogue and advocacy (Chapter 1), value chain development (Chapter 2) and provision of information services (Chapter 3).

The booklet features 18 stories covering all ACP regions, documenting the transformative power of these innovative technologies.

Feedback from beneficiaries, together with the results of impact assessment exercises, has guided CTA in increasing the breadth of services delivered and their geographical scope. ■



Facts & Figures

1005

Total number of
trainees in 2014

3636



participants
since 2009



62%

MEN



38%

WOMEN

Age groups



18-35 YEARS



36-49 YEARS



50-65 YEARS

Face-to-face events in 41 countries

Barbados
Belgium
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Comoros
Congo Brazzaville
Cook Islands
Côte d'Ivoire

Ethiopia
Fiji
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea-Conakry
Haïti
Kenya
Lesotho
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius

Morocco
Namibia
Nigeria
Papua New Guinea
Rwanda
Samoa
Senegal
Seychelles
Somalia
South Africa
St. Lucia

Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Trinidad and
Tobago
Uganda
Vanuatu
Zambia
Zimbabwe

37%

participants holding a
bachelor's degree

1 IN 3

participants holding
capacity building
responsibilities

12% from the
Caribbean & Pacific

88% from Africa

4 TOP SECTORS

Academia Civil society
Government Private sector

Policy dialogue and advocacy

Using social media to shape policy

What are effective ways of stimulating policy dialogue on agricultural and rural development in ACP countries? What are the best tools for putting ARD issues in the spotlight to stimulate change? These are some of the questions explored in this chapter on policy dialogue and advocacy. It includes five testimonies on how Web 2.0 and social media can be used to encourage interaction on these key issues among as many stakeholders as possible – from farmers, researchers and young ICT innovators to extension officers and employees of ministries.

By sharing information collected from a variety of channels, social media can really help to shape agricultural policy

In Uganda, for example, a young trainee-turned-trainer is trying to persuade the government through social media to support the use of ICTs in agriculture and develop policies to involve the rural youth. He is also using an open-source crowdmapping platform to highlight incidences

of poor service delivery in communities. The issues posted on the platform are used to generate advocacy and policy change.

In another example, a social media consultant in Tanzania is providing social media consultancy services for a range of events aimed at driving policy change in favour of agriculture. One of them, the Farmers Radio Poll, is an innovative mobile phone and radio-based survey that aims to make farmers' voices reach policymakers. The poll is part of a larger campaign to encourage African leaders to invest more in agriculture.

In Madagascar, ICTs are proving a powerful tool to influence policymakers. An e-discussion platform launched in 2012 has encouraged interaction on topics linked to agriculture and rural development, attracting large numbers of contributors, including researchers, extension agents, farmers' association representatives and even a number of staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and Environment. Indeed, this story shows that by sharing information collected from a variety of channels, social media can really help to shape agricultural policy. ■



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Throughout the world, internet has become part of everyday life.

STORY 1

A platform for rural policy development

The advent of Web 2.0 and social media is helping to drive agriculture and rural development in Madagascar. The introduction of blogs, Facebook and an e-discussion platform is encouraging rural development actors to connect and network – including some from unexpected quarters.

There are changes happening in Madagascar. Agriculture and rural development, and the policies that will govern their future, are moving further into the spotlight. The shift is partly due to the introduction of new ICTs, says Andrianjafy Rasoanindrainy, widely acknowledged as the driving force behind the adoption of Web 2.0 and social media among agriculture and rural development (ARD) actors in Madagascar. These new technologies are helping to push the frontiers of communication and exchange of information – and are drawing a wider range of players into the ARD debate.

Rasoanindrainy is executive director of Farming & Technology for Africa (FTA), a Madagascar-based platform for sharing ideas and opportunities in the field of agriculture and rural development, especially through ICT4D. He was lead trainer for five CTA-supported LO courses on Web 2.0 and social media held in Madagascar from 2012 to 2013. Participants included researchers, extension agents, trainers and farmer leaders. FTA has since organised separate training sessions in Web 2.0 and social media for women and farmers' organisations and it is planning to hold more training sessions for rural development actors. It teamed up with CTA again later in 2014 to hold a one-month

distance-learning course, followed by a "One day to build your website or blog" programme.

The training courses held to date have been quick to make an impact, on several levels. Most obvious has been the change for the players on the ground – the farmers and the extension agents and the researchers who serve them. New and faster methods of communication have created linkages between the various groups, bringing real benefits to the end users – small-scale farmers.

Search engines have proved the most popular tool, followed by blogs and Facebook to increase visibility and share best practices. Some farmers and extension agents have started talking by Skype, especially when they live in remote areas.

"Web 2.0 and social media training has helped actors to know each other and open new opportunities," says Rasoanindrainy, who is also an advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture and manager of two local rural development projects, Ecovillage Madagascar and Rural eMarket. "The main problem in developing countries such as Madagascar is that they are very fragmented. Researchers do their research but they don't consult farmers, and sometimes farmers have very interesting findings, but they keep these


530

members are interacting on agriculture and rural development on the GroupSpaces forum in Madagascar



Web 2.0 and social media training has helped actors to know each other and to open new opportunities.

to themselves. With Web 2.0 and social media we found that researchers, extension agents and farmers' organisations could start to be interactive with each other and between themselves."

To illustrate his point, Rasoanindrainy cites the case of an extension agent who recently received training in Web 2.0 and social media. He was asked by farmers to give help on livestock issues, such as information on breeding pigs and cattle, as well as vaccination, disease and feeding. The farmers expected a long wait before they received a reply to their request, but were surprised when the agent contacted them just two days later with detailed answers.

"The farmers were astonished, compared with past performance, and with the speed and volume of the content that he was able to collect in such a short space of time, by doing advanced searches on the internet," says Rasoanindrainy. "The extension agent was located in a very remote area, where there was no access to any physical information source, such as a library or documentation centre. But he quickly gathered a great deal of good information via the internet and shared it with the farmers."

"With Google searches and networking via Web 2.0 tools, gathering information is much faster and more cost effective," he adds. "Provided you have access to reliable sources of information you can get what you are looking for directly on your screen."

On another level, ICTs are proving a powerful tool to influence policymakers in Madagascar. Using GroupSpaces, the Acteur Dev Mada e-discussion platform was launched in 2012 to motivate interaction on topics linked to

agriculture and rural development, attracting large numbers of contributors. The GroupSpaces forum, which interacts on agricultural and rural development issues, currently has more than 530 members, made up of researchers, extension agents, farmers' association representatives and, most recently, government officials involved in policy decisions.

A number of staff from different ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and Environment, have asked to join and are playing an active role in the forum, learning about the challenges facing farmers and taking part in online debates on issues such as rural development policy reform in Madagascar and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The Agricultural and Rural Development Policy Unit, which is linked to the Prime Minister's Office in Madagascar, is using Acteur Dev Mada to share information collected from other members of the platform and from other channels.

"Things are changing quickly in Madagascar. The platform has grown fast and there are now some very well-placed players who have asked to participate in the discussions," says Rasoanindrainy. "More and more topics are posted and discussed there as it is becoming the main open and most used discussion platform for rural development in Madagascar. A forum like this can really help to shape agricultural policy." ■

STORY 2

Uncovering inspirational solutions

An agronomist working as an extension agent in Cameroon has used training in Web 2.0 and social media to coordinate his work better, including advance preparation for field visits. He reports a sizeable increase in uptake of improved practices among farmers. And his blog posts on urban agriculture have earned him a dedicated following.

Ever since he took part in the CTA YoBloCo context, blogging has become a way of life for Jean Takuete. He uses his blog to share information about his work as an extension agent in Cameroon, passing on tips to farmers. He also uses the space to publicise details of job or training opportunities, and to express opinions on issues of agriculture and rural development, particularly where young people are concerned.

“These days, keeping a blog has become part of my daily routine,” says Takuete, who attended a CTA-supported online UNITAR/FAO training course in April 2013, followed by further CTA Web 2.0 face-to-face training later in the same year. “The skills I learned have completely changed the way I work, as well as increasing the impact of my activities.”

Part of Takuete’s job involves training members of farmers’ organisations in the field, teaching them how to make the most efficient use of inputs, diagnose crop disease and access markets for their products. Nowadays, he uses Web 2.0 tools to research up-to-date material and then posts them on his blog for farmers.

“First of all, Web 2.0 tools enable me to see the experiences and solutions of people in other loca-

tions, by searching websites and subscribing to RSS feeds. Then I post them on my blog,” he explains. “That is far more effective than the traditional way of sending a report by post or as an attachment to an email. One thing that has been very striking has been the level of adoption of good practices by beneficiaries. I see this when I go out in the field.”

In a practical sense, Takuete’s new knowledge has helped him to work from a distance, planning field visits – which often involve long journeys – so as to make them more effective. It has also proved invaluable in preparing the annual agriculture day for farmers in Nda’a, a rural area of western Cameroon, which he helps to promote, using Web 2.0 tools and social media. The agriculture day that Takuete helped to organise in March 2014, the second of its kind, attracted more than 420 exhibitors, nearly three times as many as the first one, a factor that he attributes to better preparation using distant working Web 2.0 tools such as Google Apps and greater awareness due to social media platforms.

Takuete makes copious use of Facebook for sharing information, as well as Skype for voice communication. Not only is Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) communication cheaper than

traditional telephones, it also enables people working on a project or other initiative to hold group conversations through conference calls.

During work as part of his MSc degree at the University of Yaoundé, Takuete used advanced internet searches to conduct research for scientific information on vegetable production in sacks. He has since widely shared his findings on sustainable techniques for urban and peri-urban agriculture, through social media platforms, such as Facebook. As a result of some of these posts, he was recently invited to take part in a workshop staged by Protège QV, an NGO working to highlight environmental protection in Cameroon.

In common with many other parts of rural Africa, community radio is one of the most effective channels for diffusing agricultural information in Cameroon and Takuete has been quick to use Web 2.0 platforms to improve content on the local Agropastoral programme broadcast by Radio Batcham. He uses Web 2.0 tools to hold pre-programming discussions with the presenters and share innovative agricultural information.

As a member of the Global Youth Innovation

Community radio is one of the most effective channels for diffusing agricultural information in many parts of rural Africa

Network (GYIN-Cameroon) and YPARD-Cameroon, both networks of young people working to promote rural development for youth, Takuete finds collaborative Web 2.0 tools highly effective for planning activities with members, who may be scattered across a wide area. He has launched five discussion groups for GYIN and

moderates two of them, using Google Drive to share and work on documents, and he has set up a Google group for the YPARD-Cameroon community, where he is the national moderator.

Takuete believes strongly in the potential of ICT4Ag in Cameroon, especially for the younger generation that has become disaffected with rural life, not least due to lack of employment opportunities. Young people often contact him to thank him for opportunities for work or training that they have received as a direct result of the social media platforms he manages. And he is anxious to do more to develop this approach.

In June 2014, Takuete was one of three trainers at a Web 2.0 and social media course organised in Yaoundé with CTA support for 24 young people from development associations. The course was so successful that plans are now underway to offer a similar series of training initiatives for communications officers at the Ministry of Agriculture, to encourage better information sharing.

“That training for young people will have a big knock-on effect as each person who attended it will go back to their association and report on the potential of the tools they have learned to use,” observes Takuete. “At present, ICT4Ag courses hardly exist at all in my country and I would like to change that. It is a subject that should be integrated into agricultural training at all educational institutions. ICT4Ag plays a fundamental role in developing agriculture.” ■

STORY 3

Information is power for small-scale farmers

An umbrella association for producers' organisations in Central Africa is mainstreaming Web 2.0 and social media to improve coordination between staff, members and partners. But at the end of the day, the real winners are the farmers.

At the Regional Platform of Central African Farmers Organisations (PROPAC), which groups together ten national producers' organisations, staff know that their ultimate responsibility is to serve small-scale farmers.

“PROPAC covers the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)-Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) area, where 70% of the population practices family farming,” says Michel Atangana,



ICT4Ag plays a fundamental role in developing agriculture.

© CTA

who is the manager of information and communication at the Cameroon-based organisation. “The real beneficiaries of our activities are smallholder producers.”

With this in mind, Atangana and his team are working to ensure that information about issues affecting smallholder farmers is made available to them; whether it is innovative farm practices, market opportunities or changes in agricultural policies, farmers’ views are sought and shared. Web 2.0 and social media tools are making that task easier, changing the way PROPAC staff interact with each other and member organisations, so that information and knowledge sharing is filtered down to farmers.

Crucial to the process have been the new skills learned by Atangana. In April 2012, he was introduced to Web 2.0 and social media at a LO course held by CTA. In November 2013, he honed his skills further with his participation in a CTA-supported online course run by UNITAR. “I have learned to use RSS feeds, improve production and collaboration through Wikis, use Google Drive, Twitter, Skype, online maps, blogging tools and social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn,” he says. Following the training, Atangana passed on some of his new skills to other staff members at PROPAC.

“That made a big difference in the way we were able to work,” he observes.

Specifically, all physical documents have been digitised and staff now share electronic documents using collaborative tools, with each other and with PROPAC member organisations, who are encouraged to take part in online communities, meaning

greater knowledge sharing and more discussions.

A PROPAC Facebook page enables information and updates to be shared with the organisation’s communities.

“It also allows us to present a more attractive image of African agriculture, to share different opinions on agricultural policies and programmes and spread the word about innovations and practices used in other parts of the world,” says Atangana.

Twitter helps PROPAC staff to issue real-time updates on activities and the organisation’s position on critical policy issues. Slideshare, a Web 2.0 tool, is used to make documents available online, Google+ to share photos and information on agricultural policy and YouTube to post interviews. A blog run by PROPAC for rural women posts regular articles on policies that may affect them and highlights achievements by women farmers. The organisation has also begun designing a regional database containing up-to-date information on prices and production quantities for various sectors in the region.

“The Web tools have enabled us to have extensive media coverage and significantly increase our visibility,” says Atangana. “Members of PROPAC are better informed on policies and programmes which affect them and can access techniques, practices and innovations used elsewhere. Our partners are more able to follow the programmes and activities we implement. Communities have a deeper knowledge of PROPAC and are in touch with us on a regular basis.”

As part of the new focus on information management, Atangana was closely involved in



developing a CTA-supported knowledge platform for the Pan African Farmers Organisation (PAFO), to stimulate exchanges on agricultural policy in the run-up to the African Union summit in January 2014. PAFO, whose members include farmers' organisations in five regions, used the platform to plan a continental briefing in Yaoundé, Cameroon in December 2013. The initiative made use of GroupSpaces as a discussion platform to share views on how to improve farmers' organisations and help PAFO to formulate policy ideas.

Tasked with handling gender issues within PAFO, PROPAC is helping to raise awareness of the potential of social media platforms for rural women. In December 2013, it organised the African Rural Woman Forum (ARW2013), with a special session for more than a hundred women on the innovative role of social media and the opportunities they offer to producers' organisations. The forum, which will be held again in 2014, seeks to involve rural women in developing agricultural policies and strategies.

Passing on ICT skills to young farmers is crucial and PROPAC is planning knowledge management, Web 2.0 and social media sessions for young people at CHASAADD-M, a centre near Yaoundé, which trains up to one hundred people in agriculture and sustainable development each year.

Says Atangana: "We are going to introduce them to tools that will give them access to information about innovative techniques and productive agricultural practices, show them how to take part in online networks and discussion forums, how to publicise their activities and

collaborate with other farmers from a distance, with the overall aim of turning them into lead farmers who are open to ICTs for agricultural development."

Ultimately, Atangana would like to set up an ICT4Ag training centre for young farmers in Central Africa. But before ICTs can be used to their full potential, there are some hurdles to overcome.

"These young people are very enthusiastic about our initiative," observes Atangana. "But we need to resolve a number of challenges, including a shortage of infrastructure for ICTs and poor connectivity." ■

Working to ensure that information about issues affecting smallholder farmers is made available to them; whether it is innovative farm practices, market opportunities or changes in agricultural policies, farmers' views are sought and shared

STORY 4

Making the voice of producers heard

Committed social media consultant Juma Ngomuo strongly believes in the power of ICTs to influence agricultural policy. From better land access for women to more sustainable opportunities for youth, this young Tanzanian is working to ensure that important issues reach the ears of policymakers.

Juma Ngomuo is a busy man. With CTA support, he has learned to use ICTs to promote farming as a business, and influence policy so that young people have a better chance of making a successful career in agriculture.

Twenty-eight-year-old Ngomuo, who has a degree in rural development, confesses to being ‘addicted to social media’. He currently runs three blogs, seven Facebook pages and a handful of Twitter accounts. He regularly posts videos on YouTube. He learned about the tools at a Web 2.0 Learning Opportunity course run by CTA in 2013.

In his day job – though his work spills over into all hours – Ngomuo is Programme Support Officer for the Tanzanian Graduate Farmers’ Association, a member-based organisation working to promote entrepreneurship for farmers, especially youth. Part of his work involves managing the organisation’s social media accounts, to drive interest in the sector among young people and link agripreneurs with service providers and markets.

He also runs several projects and pages of his own. Over the past few months, Ngomuo has provided social media consultancy services for a range of events aimed at driving policy change

in favour of agriculture. Among them was the Regional Youth Green Growth Forum, held in Kenya in December 2013, which brought together African youth representatives to discuss ways of increasing sustainable opportunities for young people. Another was the Farmers Radio Poll, an innovative mobile phone and radio-based survey conducted in June 2014 to help farmers’ voices reach policymakers.

The poll was part of a campaign called Do Agric that was launched to encourage African leaders to invest more in agriculture. It goes without saying that Ngomuo has been active in that too, as campaign youth ambassador and social media reporter.

“I am addicted to social media,” he says. “We are living in a digitised world where information is power and as information is everywhere, the power is there to switch on and get updated.”

As assistant social media reporter for the Advancing Land Rights for Women-TZ campaign, Ngomuo is helping to promote land access for women, using Facebook to bring the issue to light.

Ngomuo says he loves what he is doing – and it shows. He has rapidly built up a dedicated

following for his social media outlets. And he believes strongly in the power of web-based tools to advocate for better policies.

“Using ICTs to influence government policy can be very important, because if you use social media you can get wide support, so the government will respond,” he says. Ngomuo cites the groundswell of opinion mobilised by social media as part of the Do Agric campaign aimed at prompting leaders to respect their commitment to the 2003 Maputo Declaration and invest 10% of budgets in agriculture. More than 2.2 million signatures

were collected through a petition and delivered to leaders at the Africa Union Summit in Equatorial Guinea in June 2014.

“It’s also a way of informing the rest of the world that farming is cool, if only you do it better,” says Ngomuo. “It’s a way of telling people what we are doing, the challenges faced by farmers and the opportunities that exist. I want to promote policies that will give smallholder farmers, youth and women the best chance to make the most of those openings.” ■



On 20 January 2014, African pop star D'banj became the first person to publicly sign the Do Agric petition online, during the campaign launch in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

© One Campaign

STORY 5

Social media for advocacy

A young man who received CTA training in Web 2.0 and social media has gone on to become a trainer himself. Working for Ugandan NGO WOUGNET, which promotes the use of ICTs by women and women organisations, Moses Owiny is a firm believer in the power of Web 2.0 and social media for policy change.

With the world's second youngest population, and 83% of 15–24 years olds without jobs, Uganda urgently needs to galvanise its agriculture sector and attract young people to a career in farming. Social media trainer Moses Owiny is convinced that this is the best solution for tackling poverty and high youth unemployment.

“Agriculture development practitioners, policymakers, the private sector, government agencies and other professionals must articulate a new vision of agriculture that can be attractive to young people,” says Owiny, who is Programme Manager for information sharing and networking for Ugandan NGO the women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET). He believes that



Olive Namoso, widow and mother of six, picks coffee berries from her garden.

“ICTs are essential coordinating mechanisms in the agricultural and rural development field, and hence their integration in the delivery of agricultural information, markets and all the processes across the value chain is significant.”

Owiny's involvement with CTA dates back to 2009 when he was working on a WOUGNET project helping rural women to access ICTs in northern Uganda. He was invited to attend a CTA international knowledge for development workshop in Namibia, followed by a CTA-funded training course for management of electronic portals developed by CTA for partners in Accra, Ghana a year later. Those courses whetted his appetite for ICT4D.

“I became fascinated by these tools and did everything I could to find out more about how to use them. My skills developed quite fast and I learned a great deal,” he said.

After developing his own social media pages, blogs and Twitter account, Owiny won a fellowship to New York in 2011 as part of the US State Department's Community Solutions Program, implemented by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX). His task was to train low-income women in using social media and Web 2.0 platforms to improve their job prospects.

The following year, after participating in the UNITAR/FAO online course Innovative Collaboration for Development (ICfD), with sponsorship from CTA, the young Ugandan began to deliver training in Web 2.0 and social media skills within WOUGNET. Using CTA's curriculum, WOUGNET offers customised courses in franchised mode, helping people to improve

their ICT skills, especially the young. To date, Owiny has trained more than 40 people.

He receives frequent feedback from young people he has introduced to Web 2.0 and social media, including a number who were subsequently selected to be social media reporters for the CTA ICT4Ag Conference in Kigali, Rwanda in November 2013.

Today, Owiny's face and name are well known in the social media circuit. He is regularly invited to take part in platforms, such as the 4M Annual Meeting organised by Canal France International (CFI) in Kenya in November 2013. And he is active in using social media for advocacy to elicit more government support for ICTs for agriculture and better policies for rural youth.

“There are quite a few examples of Web 2.0 and social media used for advocacy,” says Owiny, 30. “For example, at WOUGNET, we use an open source free social media crowdmapping platform called Ushahidi to highlight issues of poor service delivery within communities. The information is mapped on the platform and the issues that are posted are used for generating advocacy and policy change.”

He cites the use of other social media platforms, such as Facebook, to engage policy makers.

“If you set up a page, then you can share issues and experiences to make government officials be more transparent and deliver better services. I think the more we use social media to encourage engagement between the local community and service providers, then the stronger the impact will be.” ■

Value chain development

Boosting the connections

How can Web 2.0 and social media help farmers, producers, and other stakeholders strengthen their position in the agricultural value chain? Which specific tools are best suited for finding information about crops, accessing markets and sharing new technologies? The five testimonies in this chapter focus on the full range of activities required to move an agricultural product from the farm to the market and the consumer.

How can Web 2.0 and social media help farmers, producers, and other stakeholders strengthen their position in the agricultural value chain? Which specific tools are best suited for finding information about crops, accessing markets and sharing new technologies?

In one case, an agronomist in Madagascar turned to Web 2.0 and social media in an attempt to save the island's bee population, which was being devastated by disease. He started writing a blog and contacted foreign beekeepers for advice; he was subsequently invited to attend training in France. Soon he was travelling throughout France and Belgium gaining more valuable knowledge,

which convinced him that there was scope to develop the honey value chain in Madagascar. The agronomist has now set up a fair trade association for beekeeping and is using social media tools to promote his initiative.

In Samoa, a media specialist at a womens' organisation launched a programme for village women to revive the traditional craft of weaving mats from Pandanus (screw pine). Another of the programme's aims was to teach more users about the benefits of ICTs, especially in rural areas. Training in social media such as Facebook and Twitter for marketing purposes has helped weavers reach clients in Toga, for example, which is Samoa's second biggest market for mats.

In another example, a district cocoa technical officer in Ghana has been using Web 2.0 tools to promote the development of products rooted in a local geographical and cultural environment by means of a 'geographical indication'. A geographical indication is a sign used on certain products that corresponds to a specific location to certify that a product is made according to traditional methods and has a verifiable geographical origin. ■



© CTA

Tomato producers can strengthen their position in the agricultural value chain by using Web 2.0 and social media.

STORY 6

Blogging for farmers

In Uganda, producers and community-based organisations are discovering the benefits of Web 2.0 and social media. Local NGO BROSDI is using ICTs to support producers, processors and other actors in agricultural value chains. And it has devised an ingenious way of linking farmers who still have no access to the internet.

Ednah Karamagi, executive director of the Busoga Rural Open Source Development Initiative (BROSDI), was using Web 2.0 and social media tools long before she knew them by their official names. The date she found out what they were really called – and a great deal more about their uses – is etched firmly in her memory. It was 25 September 2007 and she had been invited to attend the CTA-led Web 2.0 for Development international conference in Rome.

“I remember that day very clearly,” she recalls. “I had never even heard about the terms Web 2.0 and social media. We were using what I then called knowledge-sharing applications to implement our projects.”

Once back in Uganda, where BROSDI is using ICTs for knowledge sharing to improve rural livelihoods, Karamagi developed the NGO’s use of Web 2.0 and social media applications and began training farmers and other users, as well as passing on the skills to BROSDI staff.

One of them was Programme Manager Maria Nakirya. Within just one month of a short introduction from Karamagi to Web 2.0 and social media tools such as blogs, search engines, Twitter and Facebook, she had learned so much that she was

designing blogs herself, teaching others to use them and putting them to work for Ugandan farmers.

Such was their progress that Karamagi and her team were soon asked by CTA to conduct training sessions on Web 2.0 and social media in Uganda. The NGO has now run five training courses sponsored by CTA, supporting actors along agricultural value chains. It continues to organise other Web 2.0 and social media training workshops, based on the CTA training module, which BROSDI has now added to, with tips on writing effective blogs and attracting more followers.

The results have been swift and impressive. Some of the farmers trained by BROSDI have learned to write blogs, sharing useful practices with other farmers. Trainees from community-based organisations (CBOs) have obtained funding after BROSDI showed them how to use search engines to look for donors.

A number of farmers have connected to new markets. After training, one farmer in Mbarara who wanted to increase sales of apple bananas (Latundan bananas) identified a market in Europe and connected with other producers to engage in collective selling. Another, who had never used a computer in his life, has used



© BROSDI

These farmers from Mbarara, Uganda, are explaining about the apple bananas. A number of farmers have connected to new markets.

ICT knowledge acquired to find markets for the cabbages he grows and develop processing techniques to add value to his products and avoid post-harvest wastage. He is now selling to supermarkets in Kampala.

A group of producers called CELAC Kayunga Farmers Network has used training in Web 2.0 to search the internet and learn how to make a sun drier. The group is now using the device to dry bananas, pineapples and mushrooms for sale to supermarkets throughout Uganda. Drying increases the products' shelf life and adds value. Group members are charged a lower price to dry their crops, and the drier also earns income as a paid-for service for other farmers.

For producers, says Karamagi, the most useful tools are search engines – to find information and markets – and blogs, for sharing ideas and developing networks. For NGOs, Twitter and LinkedIn are valuable. “You have to know how to use these tools productively. Otherwise you can find yourself lost in a big bowl of information,” she said. “You have to understand how to use them so they will benefit you.”

Since smartphones are now cheap in Uganda, BROSDI training involves showing farmers and other users how to make the most of Web 2.0 and social media apps on their mobile devices. People can visit BROSDI offices in Mayuge district for hands-on training and to use the NGO's computers. Even farmers without internet access can use blogs. BROSDI has developed a service to post material from farmers who have best practices they want to share. Producers in rural areas send the information in by mail, or as letters that are transported on buses. BROSDI staff

type up the content and post it on the NGO's Collecting and Exchange of Local Agricultural Content (CELAC) blog. They also print useful blog articles and distribute them to farmers who have no other way of reading them.

For NGOs and CBOs without the resources to develop, host and manage a website, BROSDI offers a simple solution, which involves developing a blog on WordPress and turning it into a website that is free of charge. “I don't see why anyone should pay premium costs,” said Karamagi.

The NGO also provides training in blog marketing, teaching farmers and organisations how to drive more traffic to their online spaces, by showing them how to write in a certain way and link pages to specific groups on other platforms, such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

For producers, the most useful tools are search engines – to find information and markets – and blogs, for sharing ideas and developing networks. For NGOs, Twitter and LinkedIn are valuable

“These days, you have to take an extra step for blog marketing,” said Karamagi. “If you don't market your blog out here, you will not get people interacting with you, so many people give up after a short while. But if you get feedback from different parts of the world, responding and commenting, you know people are reading what you have written, it gives you energy and the enthusiasm to carry on.” ■

STORY 7

Linking players in the beekeeping value chain

An agronomist from Madagascar has used Web 2.0 and social media to develop knowledge about apiculture. International contacts forged through blogging have led to training and exchange visits in Europe. Now, a Fairtrade beekeeping association is promising to help local beekeepers to develop the honey value chain.

When a devastating disease began spreading through beehives in Madagascar, threatening the indigenous breed *Apis mellifera unicolor*, Fidy Andriamamonjy knew that outside help would be needed to halt the scourge. He decided to draw attention to the plight of the island's beekeepers using social media tools he had learned at a CTA LO course in 2012.

Andriamamonjy's decision to create a blog about the varroosis bee disease started a chain of events that no one could have foreseen, least of all this agronomist, who worked in communications at the Technical and Economical Information Centre (CITE) in Antananarivo, using radio to disseminate information about the agricultural sector. By 2014, the quest that started out as a mission to save the island's bee population had developed into a wide-ranging strategy to develop the country's apiculture value chain, including exports of local honey to Europe.

"At the time I didn't know much about beekeeping. And this was the first time I had ever used a blog, Facebook or any of the other tools. I had never done anything like that before," he recalls. "But the disease was continuing to spread, so I started to

contact foreign beekeepers who might be familiar with it, and asked their advice."

Andriamamonjy posted photographs, videos and articles about the disease on his blog, then used Google+ and email to discuss the situation with beekeepers in France and Belgium, with whom he had been in touch through social media platforms.

"They told me about possible remedies. It was really the blog that enabled me to find and offer some solutions to the disease," he says. "I wrote about some of the solutions that had been used in France."

A French beekeeping association contacted Andriamamonjy and offered to host him for a training course on bee diseases. An exchange visit soon followed to other beekeeping associations, with Andriamamonjy travelling all over France and Belgium to learn about best practices. The experience convinced him that there was scope to develop the apiculture value chain in his home country, and he launched a Fairtrade association called Beemada – using social media tools to attract interest.



Money was urgently needed to help local beekeepers restore their hives, so Andriamamonjy turned to crowdfunding platform Ulule to launch a save a hive campaign, posting information and videos about the challenges of beekeeping in Madagascar. The appeal raised € 2,842 more than the target figure.

Spurred on by the success, the agronomist decided to develop his blog, expanding it to deal with apiculture in Madagascar in general, and adding pages with information about other aspects of beekeeping.

“The idea was to bring the people I knew who had a passion for beekeeping together,” he explains. “I created a Facebook page and through this I tried to develop the apiculture sector in Madagascar.”

Today, Andriamamonjy’s blog offers an information service on beekeeping in Madagascar, with advice on production and on preventing disease. “As a result I have been contacted by many people, within Madagascar and from abroad, wanting information on prices, production and training and to know more about marketing. It’s really beginning to take off, thanks to the blog and Facebook,” he reports.

Andriamamonjy is confident that there is strong potential for apiculture in Madagascar. He is now planning to devote his energies fulltime to the sector. He is co-writing a book on bee disease and beekeeping in Madagascar. And he is launching a Fairtrade social enterprise called Happy Madagascar, to provide support to local beekeepers and develop the honey export market. Bringing actors in the value chain together is the key, he believes.

“The problem with the bee product value chain in Madagascar is the lack of information and links between all the various actors. There are producers who are making products, but who are not in contact with other players upstream and downstream in the value chain,” he says. “There are people wanting to buy honey and other products who can’t do so because the market is not well developed as it is in some other countries. So Web 2.0 and social media can help create links between the different actors in the value chain, not just between the beekeepers themselves, but also those working in research. I am now in touch with them, in Madagascar and abroad.”

In 2011, Madagascar was able to lift a long-standing embargo on honey exports to Europe, its main market. In January 2014, the country exported a shipment of 1.8 tonnes of lychee honey to Europe, for a price of € 14 per kg.

“That is still a relatively small volume, but the price is good, compared with normal honey prices, because you don’t find honey like that anywhere else in the world,” says Andriamamonjy. He is convinced that local organic honey produced from eucalyptus, baobab and lychee flowers can continue to fetch premium prices.

“The plan is to work on export sales of honey from Madagascar, but we are also going to be supplying beekeeping materials to local producers,” he adds. “I already know how I’m going to develop all this. I will be using my social networks of course.” ■



A farmer collecting honey in Vavatenina district, Madagascar.

STORY 8

From geographical indications to cocoa disease

A district cocoa technical officer is using Web 2.0 tools to find and promote potential geographical indication (GI) projects in his native Ghana. Ignatius Pumpuni explains how his ICT training is helping him to collaborate on GIs with other colleagues – and how it helped him to identify a mysterious cocoa disease in a farmer's field.

Ignatius Pumpuni, who works as a district technical officer for the Ghana Cocoa Board, believes that one good turn deserves another. So when he was invited to attend a workshop on geographical indications (GI) in June 2014, he offered to share the knowledge he had acquired about Web 2.0 with other participants. The CTA-supported training on capacity strengthening for GI products, held in Akosombo, Ghana, sought to boost interest in the potential of developing products that are rooted in local geographical and cultural environments and command a price premium as a result.

Challenges include setting up institutional, legislative and organisational frameworks and mechanisms to establish, monitor and control production methods to ensure that products are GI-compliant

Firmly convinced of the scope for a stronger value chain approach to agricultural production in Ghana, Pumpuni knew he had his own contribution to make.

“During the training, I negotiated some time to share with other participants on how to use Google Alerts and other Web 2.0 applications

to get useful information on Geographical Indications,” he said. “They were all amazed at the things these tools could do and how these could help them with their work. Immediately after the presentation, one of the participants from Gambia had already received three alerts on topics of direct interest to him.”

At the end of the workshop, participants were divided into groups for follow-up practical work. Pumpuni's team opted to focus on identifying and promoting potential GI-linked products in Ghana. As part of the project, team members decided to design a database for possible GI products. Scattered throughout various parts of the country, they are now using Google Alerts to conduct research and Google Drive to collaborate and share their work online.

Ghana has a range of agricultural products that could be developed into GIs, including: Ghana Fine Flavor Cocoa, Shama shea butter, Shama yam, Sugarloaf pineapple, Chocho tea and Zomi palm oil. Challenges include setting up institutional, legislative and organisational frameworks and mechanisms to establish, monitor and control production methods to ensure that products are GI-compliant.



Aminatu Kasim, a Kuapa Kokoo farmer, spreads her cocoa beans out to dry in the sun. Kuapa Kokoo is a Fairtrade-certified cocoa farmers organisation with 45,000 members spread across the forests of Kumasi, Ghana.

Pumpuni himself learned to use the innovative ICT applications during a Web 2.0 LO course conducted by CTA in Accra, Ghana, in 2010. “That training was an eye-opener to me. Before, I did not know anything about LinkedIn, Blogger, RSS Feeds, Google Drive, Google Maps and Google Alerts,” he said. “But as soon as I learned about the tools and used them, it linked me to the international world and opened new opportunities for me.”

He started by using LinkedIn to make professional contacts and get his name and profile more widely known, before moving on to Blogger to create and share information, and search engines

to help with his research work. After creating his social network account and registering on various platforms, the young cocoa extension officer invited his colleagues to follow his example and showed them how to do it. Pumpuni estimates that he has trained several hundred extension agents over the past three years, many of whom have gone on to train other people.

As well as working for the Ghana Cocoa Board, Pumpuni carries out research and consultancy work in rural development in areas that include rural entrepreneurship, cocoa value chain management, geographical indications and marketing.

“Web 2.0 has facilitated the easy flow of information among all the actors in the value chain, including information generation and research work,” said Pumpuni. “For example, the information gap between researchers, extension agents and farmers can be bridged by the use of platforms such as LinkedIn and Google Alerts. These days, I get invitations to attend workshops via LinkedIn, RSS Feeds and Google Alerts,” he said. “I use Dropbox to share information at work.”

Google Alerts soon became Pumpuni’s favourite tool, helping him to receive up-to-date and relevant information that would have been impossible to obtain as quickly through other channels.

As part of the coping strategies for climate change proposed by the project, farmers have now been given free fertiliser to improve their soil fertility and most of the cocoa farms have been rehabilitated

“For example, when I wanted to find out about climate change, I created a tailored query on Google Alerts and every policy and other information about what was happening globally on climate change was directed to my pc,” he said. As a direct result, after using various Web 2.0 applications to conduct desktop research and write a proposal, Pumpuni won a US\$ 12,000 contract from multinational chocolate manufacturer Mars Inc. The project was to assess the perception of cocoa farmers on the impact of climate change on cocoa production in six cocoa growing regions of Ghana.

“After I wrote the report, a stakeholder forum

was held to discuss the findings and it has really helped in the formulation of policies in the cocoa sector,” said Pumpuni. “For example, as part of the coping strategies for climate change proposed by the project, farmers have now been given free fertiliser to improve their soil fertility and most of the cocoa farms have been rehabilitated.”

Pumpuni says he sees the benefits of the ICTs in his work on an almost daily basis. He cites the example of a fellow extension agent who recently went to a field and saw a strange disease on some of the cocoa pods. The colleague forwarded the picture of the diseased pod via his mobile phone to Pumpuni, who immediately searched for answers using the Google search engine. A swift diagnosis was made and treatment prescribed, saving the farmer from serious losses. ■

STORY 9

Linking communities and value chains

Ugandan development actor Robert Kibaya, 2015 NetSquared Regional Ambassador for East Africa, spends a large chunk of his long day blogging about the activities of the rural NGO he founded and engaging with contacts worldwide. The results to date show he is making excellent use of his time.

The social media platforms run by Kibaya are a busy mosaic of photographs, videos and articles. There are images showing rural school children taking delivery of books and other educational materials, as well as using new computers in their classrooms. Other posts show children looking after chickens as part of a commercial poultry-keeping project to help young people pay their school fees, improve their nutrition levels and increase their entrepreneurial skills.

This committed rural development actor from Uganda estimates that he spends at least five hours each day contributing content to a series of e-discussion lists on Dgroups, and managing the blog, Facebook page and other platforms he uses to help keep his Kikandwa Rural Communities Development Organisation in the spotlight.

“I spend a great deal of time online because Web 2.0 and social media applications give you the chance to engage with other people on a global level and reach the resources you need,” he says. “At first it took longer because I was building up communities on social media platforms. It takes a great deal of time, but it’s very productive.”

Over the past five years, Kibaya has benefited from a range of CTA services, including distance learning – a UNITAR/FAO Web 2.0 and social

media course – a face-to-face Web 2.0 LO course and sponsorships to attend workshops and conferences. The skills he acquired have changed the way he works.

“The practical skills I developed from CTA’s Web 2.0 training opportunity course have enabled me to innovatively use online networks, fundraising and blogging platforms,” says Kibaya, who is much in demand as a trainer for other civil society organisations, teaching them how to develop social media platforms to increase their outreach. “Transforming information into opportunities for both personal and community development is now my day-to-day business.”

Kibaya launched the NGO of which he is executive director after spotting a serious need for initiatives to drive rural development in his area. He soon became convinced that ICTs could help.

Web 2.0 and social media applications give you the chance to engage with other people on a global level and reach the resources you need

“Agricultural development or improving the lives of rural small-scale farmers is not all about providing agricultural inputs,” he said. “Use of



© Robert Kibaya

Rural school children in Uganda receive books and other educational materials. Social media platforms were used to make this donation possible.

ICTs for agricultural and rural development is key for combating rural household poverty. Some 80% of the population in Uganda is engaged in agriculture, so unless you develop it, you will keep a large age of people in poverty. ICTs need to be developed, to bring agriculture to a certain level.”

He now writes posts on his blog to give updates on his NGO’s activities instead of laboriously writing, printing and distributing quarterly reports by hand. He has designed the blog so that it is automatically linked to other social media platforms

Blogging is one of the most valuable tools, says Kibaya. He now writes posts on his blog to give

updates on his NGO’s activities instead of laboriously writing, printing and distributing quarterly reports by hand. He has designed the blog so that it is automatically linked to other social media platforms.

“My blog connects with Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+, so when I publish, it is distributed to these networks too,” he said. “It helps to target a wider audience. If I want to reach 5,000 people, I can do it within a minute or so, with one single posting.”

Kibaya has found from experience that Web 2.0 and social media can be powerful tools for mobilising resources, both technical and financial.

He cites the case of one of his most active donors, from Texas, USA, who spotted a post that Kibaya had made on his blog and which had then been automatically posted through LinkedIn.

“He sent me US\$ 500 and I spent it distributing school materials to 500 rural pupils,” said Kibaya. “I then reported it on my blog and sent him the link, so he could see what we had done with his donation.”

The experience taught him that publicising development needs on the Web – and posting articles, photos and videos of the results – can be far more effective than traditional means of searching for donor contributions.

“Nowadays I don’t write proposals. If I have a project that needs support, I publish it on my blog and seek support for implementing it. Then I use it again to give our supporters timely feedback, so that they can see what is being done with their contributions. With blogs, you can even post videos.”

Using Web 2.0 resources to find technical material is now standard practice for Kibaya. Interested in launching a beekeeping project, he searched the internet for information, and sent out e-mails to some of his growing circle of international contacts. One of them was CTA, which offered to send him publications on how to make and maintain a beehive. A fundraising campaign soon followed, via Kibaya’s blog, Facebook page and Twitter account. The appeal raised US\$ 700 within one month, enabling Kibaya and helpers to build and distribute six beehives for rural schoolchildren.

Publicising development needs on the Web – and posting articles, photos and videos of the results – can be far more effective than traditional means of searching for donor contributions

That success has inspired Kibaya to develop the beekeeping value chain further. A US apiculture expert with experience in processing to make high quality honey and other bee products read a post on his blog. She has now agreed to travel to Uganda as a volunteer, to help Kibaya add value to his products and sell them to local and international markets.

“She is going to be helping us to become a recognised actor along a beekeeping value chain,” said Kibaya. “It just shows how ICTs can link you to skills, knowledge, people and any other resource you need to be an integral component of an agricultural value chain.”■



STORY 10

Samoan tradition meets the age of the internet

In the Pacific Island State of Samoa, an NGO is helping to give visibility to remote communities and value to their time-honoured rural skills. The strategy has paid off, with a Facebook and Twitter marketing campaign producing impressive results for women weavers of ceremonial mats.

As media specialist at Women in Business Development Inc., Faumuina F. Maria Tafuna'i was familiar with many of the Web 2.0 and social media applications. But she was keen to extend the benefits of these ICT tools to more users, especially in rural areas, where the organisation works to promote organic agricultural enterprises.

Sponsored by CTA to attend a UNITAR/FAO distance-learning course in 2013, Tafuna'i says the training has helped her organisation pursue its goal of becoming a national trainer for social media.

"We wanted to show leadership in this area, so as to roll out use of these tools throughout Samoa," said Tafuna'i, who in 2012 won CTA's international and regional (Pacific) agricultural journalism award. "It's important to us because Women in Business Development is a pioneering organisation and by doing the training through CTA, we now have a platform to share these tools."

In 2014, Women in Business Development held two workshops, to train staff from agricultural and media organisations and other NGOs

in using social media. Tafuna'i was one of the trainers. She also runs the organisation's website, Facebook page, Twitter and YouTube accounts.

Women in Business Development uses social media platforms such as Facebook to tell inspiring stories about people who are carving out a sustainable livelihood from rural enterprise, even if those people do not have a Facebook page themselves – or any other social media account or presence. Access to the internet access is still expensive in Samoa, thus not widely used by the country's population of 180,000.

"One of the problems we have in Samoa is telling our story, especially our story regarding agriculture. So what we are hoping is that by spreading the use of these tools, we may encourage more people involved in natural-resource based activities to let the world know what they are doing," said Tafuna'i.

Social media has already generated a substantial amount of e-commerce for the organisation's members, creating a window where potential buyers can connect with local products, especially traditional and indigenous ones.



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Master weaver Vilealava Vaipa'e helped revive fine mat weaving throughout Samoa.

One example is the production of fine mats – *ie sae* – soft, finely woven, traditional Samoan mats woven from the leaves from a particular species of *Pandanus*. The *ie sae* has a special place in Samoan culture and heritage and is highly prized in Samoan and Tongan culture, used during important ceremonies and rites of passage such as weddings, funerals and the investiture of chiefly titles.

After launching a programme to revive the ancient craft of weaving the mats among women in Samoan villages, Women in Business Development recently turned to social media for marketing. It has used Facebook and Twitter to target potential clients in Tonga, its second biggest market for this product, with considerable success.

“The finest mats sell for WST 7,000 (€ 2,290) each, and often initial inquiries are made through Facebook. We have been able to do quite a bit of marketing in this way,” said Tafuna’i.

In common with many ACP countries, reluctance by youth to engage in agriculture is a serious problem in Samoa, and Tafuna’i hopes that working with social media can help to address the challenge. “If we want our young people to stay on the land and enjoy agriculture as an occupation, we need to show them that it is dynamic, fun and has great potential for innovation,” she said. “We can only do that by telling more of the stories. I think social media can be one of the tools that allow that to happen, because it enables less formal communication.” ■



© Access Agriculture

Access Agriculture promotes effective agricultural training videos in local language versions for the benefit of farmers and rural businesses.

Provision of information services

The impact of knowledge sharing

How can Web 2.0 and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Wikis and RSS feeds reduce your budget by more than half and simultaneously increase efficiency? Why bring specialists together under one roof when you can do the same work online using Google Drive and Skype? The eight testimonies in this chapter on how to effectively provide information services illustrate the different ways that farmers, researchers, youth and many others in the agricultural sector in ACP countries can create and share information more easily, efficiently and at a lower cost.

In Benin, for example, an agronomy student who recently trained in Web 2.0 and social media is now improving access to information for farmers in her country, through podcasts recorded in local languages. She uses Twitter, LinkedIn, Hangout and Skype to encourage interaction and cooperation between professionals online, and is involved in a web platform that provides agricultural information for young people and allows them to share and exchange resources and ideas. More than 1,000 people have signed up to the platform, and that figure is growing.

In Madagascar, a development researcher trained in Web 2.0 and social media is helping to put a women's organisation – with no previous presence on the web – on the map. People are now contacting the organisation to ask about partnerships, offer their services or request information. This researcher also runs a personal blog. It provides highly specific information on aquaculture, for example, or beef and poultry farming.

This chapter illustrates the different ways that farmers, researchers, youth and many others in the agricultural sector in ACP countries can create and share information more easily, efficiently and at a lower cost

In Trinidad and Tobago, an agricultural blogger, journalist and social media reporter established a company that aims to empower the youth and provide better wages in the agricultural sector. Through Facebook and other social media tools, he has shared information about opportunities for young people in agriculture in the hope of persuading them to become agripreneurs. ■

STORY 11

Online counselling for rural youth

An online presence is now crucial for organisations wanting to increase their reach and visibility. In Madagascar, ICT training is helping two NGOs to become more dynamic and enabling young people to obtain useful advice about agriculture and opportunities.

Not so long ago, the National Council of Women in Madagascar (CNFM) – an organisation working in the gender and development sector – was little known outside its immediate circle. It had neither a website, nor a blog, and its activities received virtually no coverage on the Web. That all changed in December 2012, when Haingo Rasolofomanana, a development researcher working as a volunteer for the organisation, took part in a CTA LO course on Web 2.0 and social media.

Her first move was to set up a website and a blog for CNFM, focusing on women's empowerment. A Facebook page for the organisation soon followed, to debate gender issues and give updates on the organisation's activities. Within a matter of weeks, the blog had drawn several hundred visits.

Now, less than two years later, the CNFM blog has had thousands of visits from 63 countries and its Facebook page has attracted hundreds of "likes".

The use of Web 2.0 tools has enabled the organisation to place useful sources of information on gender and development online, including research reports and national and international documents

"If you don't have a presence on the Web these days, you simply don't exist," says Rasolofomanana. "CNFM has managed to increase the visibility

of its activities at national and international level. A great many people involved in the gender and development sector have seen the blog and contacted the organisation to ask for partnerships, offer services and request information."

The use of Web 2.0 tools has enabled the organisation to place useful sources of information on gender and development online, including research reports and national and international documents.

As an example, Rasolofomanana cites the Baromètre Madagascar 2012, which charts gender and climate change in the country. Use of ICTs has also helped the organisation to link with others for a common cause, for example to launch a petition, raise awareness and advocate for gender and development issues.

The training she received has improved her career prospects. Partly as a result of her new skills she was named as secretary general of Farming and Technology for Africa (FTA), an NGO working in Madagascar. She has since been made programme coordinator for FTA.

It seems a distant memory, but Rasolofomanana can recall the days when she knew very little about Web 2.0 tools that now form part of her daily life and work.

“I already used some Web 2.0 and social media tools, but not to any great extent and I had no idea that you could, for example, create your own blog,” she says. “I had a Facebook account, but I only used it for personal communication, to stay in touch with friends and find ones I’d lost touch with. I used Skype to talk to family members abroad, but I didn’t have a LinkedIn or a Twitter account and I didn’t use RSS feeds. I’d hardly heard of Pinterest or Scoop.it and I didn’t know that Google Drive existed.”

Today, Rasolofomanana runs an active personal blog about agriculture, and was a YoBloCo finalist in the 2014 CTA contest. The focus of her blog is attracting young people to the sector and answering their questions. Although she is only 30 years old, she is seen by many as a role model and a valuable source of information. Rasolofomanana encourages young people to share their views about agriculture, and provides information about opportunities, including the potential of certain sectors, such as aquaculture, beef or poultry farming. She uses Facebook on a daily basis to post news about agricultural techniques, practical information and openings, as well as to promote her blog.

“I have become a sort of online counsellor to the young (and not so young),” she says. “I am often asked for information on agriculture – things like ‘where is the livestock ministry?’, or ‘how can I find markets for pork products?’ or ‘where can I find someone to supply 20 tonnes of vegetables?’ I receive at least five messages about agriculture each day on my Facebook page.”

For both CNFM and FTA, the new tools have helped to improve working methods.

Staff now use collaborative tools, such as Google Drive, which gives users access to cloud storage, file sharing and collaborative editing. The new methods have filtered down to a number of farmers’ organisations, through training offered by FTA, sometimes with CTA support.

Connectivity and training remain the biggest hurdles to overcome if the ripple effect of Web 2.0 and social media is to spread more widely. Nowhere is this more challenging than in Madagascar’s rural areas, especially for women

“The thing that changed has been the way the organisations work, and especially the way they communicate,” says Rasolofomanana. “For CNFM, for example, information is now published in a systematic manner. The member associations, which are mainly for rural women, have begun accessing the information we share.”

Connectivity and training remain the biggest hurdles to overcome if the ripple effect of Web 2.0 and social media is to spread more widely. Nowhere is this more challenging than in Madagascar’s rural areas, especially for women. Some 80% of the country’s women live in rural areas and 87% make their living from agriculture.

“We need a critical mass if Web 2.0 is to benefit everyone, and not everyone can take part at the moment, due to lack of training or access to the internet,” says Rasolofomanana. “Who can I share my collaborative files with if not everyone is connected? And how can we ensure that women and men living in rural areas, and not just the organisations, can take advantage of the information that we are sharing?” ■



80%

of the women in
Madagascar live
in rural areas and

87%

make their living
from agriculture



© CTA

ICTs can link you to skills, knowledge, and people.

STORY 12

A new look for agriculture

A passion for social media is helping a young woman to build capacity for other young people in using ICT platforms for agriculture. She describes how training in Web 2.0 and social media has opened new opportunities for herself and her family.

It is 5 a.m., and Diana Adongo is up early as usual, making fruit wines at her home in Mbale town, Uganda. She painstakingly washes, cuts and dries passion fruit and pineapple sourced from local farmers, before extracting the pulp. It will be at least six months before the wine is ready to drink, but this graduate of Makerere Business School is confident she will sell every bottle, using a Facebook page, WhatsApp, Google+ and Twitter to reach her customers.

Adongo learned how to use social media platforms for marketing from training conducted by Joan Apio, herself a beneficiary of the Web 2.0 training course run with CTA support by the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM).

RUFORUM staff member Apio has her reasons for being enthusiastic about Web 2.0 and social media. She believes her promotion from training assistant in ICT skills to communications officer at RUFORUM was partly the result of her training in innovative web-based ICTs. She was selected to attend a CTA-run Web 2.0 LO course in 2009, followed by a UNITAR distance-learning course held with CTA support in 2012.

“I would like to think my promotion was in part due to the confidence I got with my communica-

tions skills and working with the different platforms,” said Apio, 32. She says that her knowledge has helped her to show other people, especially women, how ICTs can lead to greater opportunities.

Apio describes herself as passionate about using social media for showcasing youth initiatives in Africa and building capacity for young people in using web-based platforms for collaboration, research and development.

“I realised that most youths do not understand the real impact that social media can have when used properly,” she said. “When I did the training, it gave me a different understanding of social media. For me, when you can access information, and be able to communicate it to someone who needs it, and improve their livelihood, it is a big impact.”

A passion about using social media for showcasing youth initiatives in Africa and building capacity for young people in using web-based platforms for collaboration, research and development

As communications officer, Apio coordinates the RUFORUM network platforms, linking users and development partners. She uses a range of tools that include the website, social



A participant from Haramaya University, Ethiopia, part of the RUFORUM/CTA Web 2.0 Learning Opportunity.

media channels such as Twitter and Facebook, a monthly newsletter and MailChimp, an online tool to manage subscribers.

An active blogger, she was a finalist in the CTA 2013 YoBloCo blog contest. Apio's 'Creating impact through ICT in agriculture' blog, sets out to encourage more young people to explore agriculture's potential using ICTs. Last year, Apio was named by the CTA ARDYIS project – Agriculture, Rural Development and Youth in the Information Society – as one of the 15 most promising young women advocates of ICT and agriculture among YoBloCo Awards participants, as part of International Girls in ICT Day.

By posting inspiring stories on her blog, Apio encourages youth in various communities to give

agriculture a try. A case in point is the story of Martha Otieno, a savvy young Kenyan woman who persuaded local farmers to lease land to her. She used ICT tools to research soil management and crop production and now grows pepper, groundnut, watermelon and practices aquaculture, earning KES 500,000 (€ 4,160) a month.

Apio has taught her brother Moses Sikhu, a young rural entrepreneur, to use Web 2.0 and social media tools on his farm. The farm's Facebook page now has more than 900 followers. Sikhu has put the farm on Google Maps so that suppliers and buyers know where to find him, and he regularly communicates using WhatsApp. The moves have led to a direct increase in business, including contracts from hotels to supply fish from the farm's ponds.

In February 2013, Apio was involved in the CTA-sponsored training of 24 female RUFORUM graduates, showing them how to be productive online.

“To be able to use your online social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs to share your research interests and get free online peer reviews is very useful for these young women who may have limited resources,” said Apio. “They use Google Maps to contribute to content creation by adding missing locations or information. Through joining and using LinkedIn, a professional online platform, some of the graduates have joined professional groups such as AWARD to get career guidance and share ideas.”

Apio is happiest when she can help other young people to realise the benefits of using Web 2.0 and social media tools at first-hand. She is currently advising a young woman who grows pumpkins. “At present, this woman’s price is determined by market forces. I have suggested she uses social media to upload photos of her pumpkins when they are ripe and Google Maps to show where she is located, then offers to deliver them to the buyers,” said Apio. “That way, she creates a brand name and relations with her customers, adding value to her products that will set her apart from other suppliers.

“One thing I realised during my training was that we need to market agriculture in a much more attractive way for young people. We need to show them what it can do for them. I strongly believe that Web 2.0 and social media can help with that.” ■

We need to market agriculture in a much more attractive way for young people. We need to show them what it can do for them. I strongly believe that Web 2.0 and social media can help with that

STORY 13

ICTs pay off for farmers and telecentres

A joint training initiative by CTA and the Rwanda Telecentre Network has produced benefits all round. The network has seen communication improve between staff and members. Its telecentres have reported a sharp upturn in business. And farmers and other rural users are finding it easier to access information to increase output and sell their products.

Rwandan horticultural entrepreneur Ezron Ngamije used to have only the most basic knowledge about computers. Nowadays, he is often on the internet, updating the Facebook page he has created to market his products and advertise his small rural enterprise. He uses search engines to find inputs at the best price and regularly trawls the web for practices that can help him to improve his crop and business yields. He uses Google Drive to share photos and documents with other members of the horticulture cooperative he heads, and with his customers.

Small-scale poultry farmer Denise Mukamana is also making good use of her new knowledge of the internet. Before, she always had to ask telecentre staff to help her search the internet for any material she needed. Now she can easily do searches herself, quickly finding information that can help her solve production problems and increase her business. She makes regular use of Facebook for marketing and Google Alerts to track news stories about the poultry sector and monitor her competitors. She sends e-mails to potential customers, and reaches hundreds in just a few minutes.

For the users – mainly farmers since most of the telecentres are located in rural areas – the new skills have meant a radical change in the way they acquire and share knowledge

Both Ngamije and Mukamana were trained in Web 2.0 and social media as part of a joint initiative between CTA and the Rwanda Telecentre Network (RTN), a social enterprise working in the field of ICTs and the development of small and medium enterprises. Between 2011 and 2012, with technical and financial support from CTA, RTN facilitated and hosted three Web 2.0 LO training courses. The initiative was the first of its kind in Rwanda and offered training to around 100 people, including staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) and Ministry of Youth and ICTs (MYICT).



1,000

people have been trained in Web 2.0 and social media in Rwanda

“With Web 2.0, it is easy now to search online for markets for my products,” he said. “I have also created web pages for my company at no cost.”



© Riccardo Gangale/LRI

Web 2.0 and social media training in Musanze district, Rwanda.

Since then, RTN, which is a CTA programmatic partner, has used its network of over a hundred telecentres to provide short training courses on Web 2.0 and social media for more than 1,000 people in Rwanda. Participants are drawn from different organisations working in agriculture and rural development, including farmers' cooperatives, civil society groups, NGOs and educational institutions.

The benefits have been felt in a short time. For the users – mainly farmers since most of the telecentres are located in rural areas – the new skills have meant a radical change in the way they acquire and share knowledge. Many of them are now regular users of applications such as Facebook, Google Drive and Google Maps, to

share information and documents and find out valuable information on markets, weather and farming techniques.

“The Web 2.0 training has changed the mindset and practices of beneficiaries. The majority are farmers and their knowledge of the Web was very limited before,” said RTN Executive Director Paul Barera. “Generally they could only read or send emails and do basic searches using Google. After their training, they could do advanced searches and be more active in finding agricultural material, such as market or product information. I know some farmers’ cooperatives that have been able to create their own Facebook pages and post information on the Web to market their products and share their activities.”

For the telecentres, it has meant more business since farmers and other users visit more regularly and spend more time using their computers and internet services.

Said Barera: “After the training, we found that the number of users has increased because people in rural communities are able to use the internet more effectively and efficiently, so they spend more time at the telecentres. They will go and search for information relating to agriculture, which increases the telecentres’ revenue and therefore makes them more sustainable. Before, people would just stay for a few minutes.”

This kind of knowledge is very important for young people. When they learn how to use Web 2.0 and social media applications, they are no longer just consumers of information – they are creating information and content

For RTN itself, the introduction of Web 2.0 and social media applications has changed the way staff work and interact. They now communicate more effectively and cheaply using Web 2.0 tools, such as Google Drive. Paid-for telephone calls are a thing of the past. These days, the Monday staff meeting between RTN head office in Kigali and telecentre managers in rural areas is conducted using a free Skype conference call. As well as making regular use of Twitter, the network uses Facebook to post news and updates and to communicate with its telecentre managers; it also has a blog to share information about its activities. Increased visibility for RTN has led to greater awareness at community and local government level of the services it provides.

Such has been the success of the Web 2.0 and social media training sessions that there are plans to scale up the initiative. RTN is currently involved in talks with CTA and the Rwandan Ministry of Youth and ICT to make the services available countrywide.

“RTN is seen as a champion of Web 2.0 in Rwanda and we want to replicate the service nationwide, especially targeting young people and farmers,” said Barera. “This kind of knowledge is very important for young people. When they learn how to use Web 2.0 and social media applications, they are no longer just consumers of information – they are creating information and content.” ■

STORY 14

New horizons for youth in agriculture

Training in Web 2.0 and social media has led an NGO working for sustainable food security to highlight ICT4Ag as a key strategy. An online network developed by the Republic of Benin-based organisation is proving especially popular with young people.

Like many young people, agronomy student Pamela Afokpe was a frequent user of Facebook to keep in touch with friends and comment on their posts. Then, in early 2014, she followed an online course on Web 2.0 and social media run by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research UNITAR, with support from CTA. The experience dramatically changed her view of the role of information and communication technology in agriculture.

“It helped me to discover the huge potential that these tools have,” she wrote on a blog sometime later. “Ever since, I have used them a great deal for my professional activities. I now know how to write and maintain a blog and use my social media accounts in an effective and innovative way, as well as many other tools that I learned to use during the course.”



Online networks are popular among young people.

Afokpe, who lives in the Republic of Benin, says that the training she received exposed her to Web 2.0 and social media tools that can be leveraged to develop agriculture. “These applications can be used for facilitating access to information for our farmers, for example through podcasts recorded in local languages, to show them new agricultural practices,” she said. “They can also help to facilitate interaction, communication, cooperation and collaboration between professionals on the Web, using tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Drive, Hangout and Skype.”

These applications can be used for facilitating access to information for our farmers, for example through podcasts recorded in local languages, to show them new agricultural practices

Afokpe’s call for more young people to use ICTs for agricultural development was posted on AgroDev, a collaborative blog set up by *Actions pour l’Environnement et le Développement Durable* (ACED-BENIN), an NGO which seeks to improve sustainable food security and nutrition in Benin. The aim of the online platform, which is rapidly gaining a huge following, is to improve access to agricultural information for young people from the Republic of Benin and other francophone countries and allow them to share and exchange resources and opportunities in the agricultural sector. By mid-2014, more than 1,000 people had signed up to the platform, and that figure is growing constantly.

Several members of ACED-BENIN have also received Web 2.0 and social media training from UNITAR, with CTA support. Among them is the organisation’s executive director Frejus Thoto,

who says the training has had a powerful impact on the development of the NGO’s Strategic Plan for 2014–2018. As a result of the new knowledge, ACED now highlights ICT4Ag as a key strategy, introducing a specific programme for ICT and agriculture, with a strong focus on Web 2.0 tools.

“At ACED-BENIN, we have also used training to develop our communications plan. Before, we hardly used social media at all, but now we have developed it to make use of apps such as Twitter, Facebook and blogging,” said Thoto. “And we make strong use of RSS feeds.”

The Agrodev platform is the latest development in ACED-BENIN’s ICT4Ag strategy. Recent posts have included news of a training course – the Programme for Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation at the University of Hohenheim, and details of an opening for a trainer in water hyacinth processing as part of an ACED-BENIN project to rid local communities of this invasive species of weed.

Speaking further about the gains of the Agrodev platform: “It brings young people together for opportunities,” said Thoto. “Many of them have been able to access study grants and training and other capacity building openings from the platform.” ■

Extending community reach for telecentres and radio stations

After passing Web 2.0 and social media skills on to telecentre staff throughout the country, Cleopa Otieno has turned his attention to introducing community radio stations to Facebook and Twitter users. Now, together with a friend, he has set up a consultancy firm to leverage social media.

Kenyan computer scientist Cleopa Otieno remembers the first time he encountered Web 2.0 and became conversant with the social media tools that would help to shape his future. It was 2010, and he attended a Web 2.0 and social media LO course run by CTA in Addis Ababa. “That’s where everything started,” he said.

It was the beginning of a long relationship with CTA, including participation in an e-learning course run by UNITAR in 2012 and involvement in a CTA project to organise capacity building for telecentre staff.

Then, as now, Otieno was national coordinator of the Kenya Telecentre Network (KTN), which he had helped to launch in 2007.

“That first course gave me an opportunity to learn about Web 2.0 tools and share this new knowledge with the network,” he said. “Since then, it has helped me in many ways, in my commercial career and as an individual.”

Specifically, Otieno’s new skills have enabled Kenyan telecentres to improve their services and marketing. He was commissioned by CTA

to build capacity for Kenyan telecentres and introduced Web 2.0 and social media into the courses he runs for staff and managers.

The ICT training Otieno received has also set the foundation for the launch of a start-up offering social media services. The fledgling company designs social media strategies for customers, teaching them to use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, YouTube, WhatsApp, WordPress, Blogger and other channels.

The idea came to Otieno after talking with his friend Amos Ochieng, himself the recipient of CTA training in 2010. The consultancy firm that the pair founded is called Pixelskenya. It has already been commissioned to organise social media training for a local NGO.

For telecentre staff and managers, Otieno recommends Facebook and Twitter – the first for creating pages to share information and photographs from events and the latter for coverage of real-time functions.

“Most of the telecentres do not have their own websites, so social media platforms are a good



Civil society groups improve their way of working as a result of the training they receive.

way of sharing information,” said Otieno. He also gives advice on how to use Skype to make free phone calls and Google applications for collaboration online.

The pioneering work done by KTN has attracted the attention of UNESCO, which in 2013 contracted it to train eight Kenyan community radio stations in social media and Web 2.0 tools. Otieno is training the community radios to use Facebook and Twitter, so as to encourage participation and feedback for programming. All eight community radios have now created Facebook pages and some have set up Twitter accounts.

“Everyone following these social media groups can get updates about what is going on in the community radio stations,” explained Otieno. “It’s

a good way to help the radios market themselves and connect with their listeners, especially youth, so they can interact with programmes, maybe requesting a song or certain information.”

Otieno’s recent work with radio stations has confirmed his determination to use ICTs to further community development. He says he sees massive scope for using social media to help community organisations.

“If an organisation has an event, it wants as many people as possible to know about it. And one way to do this is through social media. These tools offer a low-cost way of doing all those things,” said Otieno. “My ambition is to grow organisations into entities that can support communities. This is what I wake up every morning to work on.” ■

STORY 16

Lower costs, better service

An agricultural consultancy firm has revolutionised the way it works and delivers information to its users. The result has been dramatic cost savings for the company and a marked improvement in service delivery, especially for women and youth interested in a career in farming.

Faster, more efficient and much, much cheaper!” That is the verdict of Eddy Fofana on the changes brought about by the introduction of new ICTs at the agricultural consultancy firm he heads in Côte d’Ivoire. Fofana is manager of FENCO, which seeks to promote agricultural enterprise, especially for young people and women. He undertook a radical overhaul of the

company’s information and communications methods after attending a CTA Web 2.0 LO course in October 2013.

Out went long-winded and costly ways of assembling material and expensive face-to-face meetings or telephone calls. In came online collaboration, Skype conferencing and



Using ICTs in agriculture can result in cost savings for farmers.

communication via blogs, Facebook and Twitter. The moves have led to significant cost savings and dramatically improved efficiency. Previously, Fofana and his staff used a laborious method to make their communication for development materials available to users, which included agricultural press reviews, agricultural news and a question and answer service. Generally, the information was assembled in a Word document before being converted to a PDF file and sent out as an email attachment.

“It was very slow and exhausting work,” says Fofana. “Since the training in Web 2.0 and social media, our way of working has changed totally. It’s fantastic. Before, when we wanted to develop an agricultural development feasibility study, we had to bring all the specialists under one roof to work together – an agronomist, a sociologist, an agro-economist, an environmental expert, etc. Now we can collaborate online from a distance, using Google Drive and talking via Skype.”

Working this way has saved the firm a massive 60% of its project design budget, says Fofana.

“It has had a very positive impact on use of staff, materials, space and time. It has brought considerable savings for our electricity, administrative, transport and other bills. We now make constant use of blogging, Twitter, Facebook, Wikis, Google Drive and RSS feeds.”

The use of social media and Web 2.0 tools has enabled the company to change the way it distributes information, resulting in a greatly improved service for users. These days, FENCO publishes relevant information through a blog, to which clients are alerted via other social media

services. It gathers feedback about content through the same channels, and adjusts the kind of material it offers accordingly.

“For example, we might write an article on the subject of agriculture and jobs and post it on our blog. We advertise it on Facebook, and anyone wanting further information can contact us by SMS, e-mail, Skype or mobile phone,” says Fofana.

Tools such as Facebook and blogs are proving especially effective for reaching young people – one of the target audiences. Social media is widely used to advertise the company’s services and activities. In May 2014, FENCO launched a booklet called *Agriculture: A Source of Employment* at a career’s fair in Abidjan. It used Facebook to promote the event and the product.

Staff also use social media platforms to interact with sources to request information about research, training and agricultural materials for its clients, and they relay the results to users through the same channels.

Future plans include the launch of agricultural information days aimed at encouraging young people to make a career in agriculture, a market information system to help farmers sell their products and an enterprise resources centre for rural and peri-urban women. Web 2.0 and social media will play a pivotal role in managing and communicating all three initiatives. ■



STORY 17

Fighting stereotypes

Agricultural blogger, journalist and social media reporter Keron Bascombe is convinced he has found the right career path at last. He is now determined to help other young people to plan a future in farming.

Keron Bascombe was doing an MSc in agribusiness and marketing at the University of West Indies (UWI) in Trinidad and Tobago when he received an e-mail that would change the course of his working life. As the winner of the Caribbean section of the CTA YoBloCo blogging contest in 2012, he was invited to be part of the social reporting team for the second Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD2) conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Sponsored by CTA to attend the event, Bascombe was given training in social media tools, communications planning, digital communication and online advocacy.

It was at that moment that Bascombe, 26 realised he wanted to be an agricultural journalist.

“I was not happy with my degree programme, though in this new career path I had the support of a few lecturers and colleagues in my endeavours,” he says. “That training propelled my decision to pursue a career in agricultural journalism and communications. Such decisions are pivotal in a young person’s life. It directly affects what kind of impact we will have in the world around us and what our passions are.”

Realising that other young people in the Caribbean also lacked direction for a dynamic

future in agriculture, Bascombe joined several fellow graduates from the University of West Indies to launch a venture that would help both youngsters with their careers and local farmers who often lacked skilled labour. The result was AgriWorks4U, a partnership company set up to provide a wide range of services in the agricultural sector and match young people with decently paid jobs and other openings.

By using an active Facebook page, together with various Web 2.0 tools, Bascombe’s initiative has provided greater opportunities for young people in agriculture. He also set up Tech4agri, a blog that serves as a platform for ICT4Ag, flags innovative agri-information and offers support to young agripreneurs in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

AgriWorks4U is a partnership company set up to provide a wide range of services in the agricultural sector and match young people with decently paid jobs and other openings

“We are trying to be as innovative as we can and show young people that the stereotypes that agriculture faces are not always true,” says Bascombe, who is also the Trinidad and Tobago

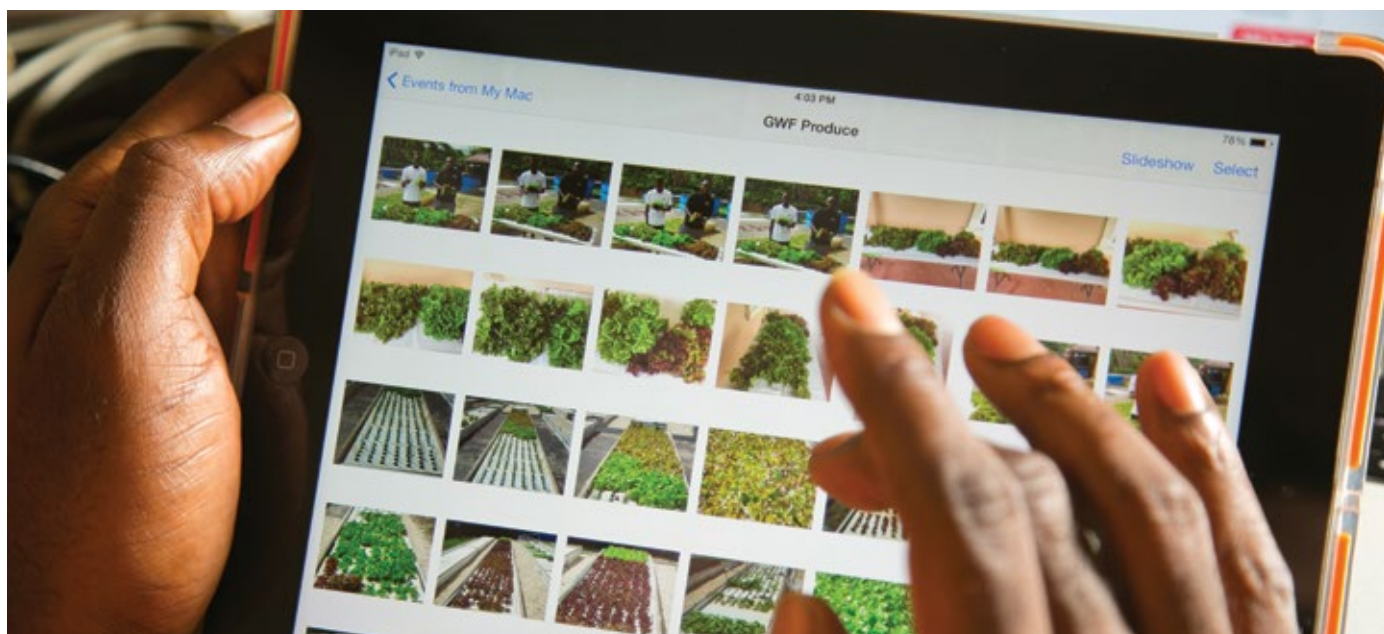
representative for the Young Professionals for Agricultural Research and Development (YPARD) platform for agricultural research and development. “Often, I see that young people studying agriculture don’t have enough practical exposure, and the students don’t know where to find opportunities. As a result, they often move on to other things. But we need more young people to stay in agriculture and pursue a career in the field.”

Aside from managing the social media platforms for his organisations, Bascombe is an active blogger on agricultural issues. He also works as a Caribbean correspondent for CTA’s Spore magazine, for the New Agriculturist and for the Young Professionals in Local Development (YPLD) website. He is currently doing a communications internship at the Global Donor

Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD), an organisation based in Bonn, Germany that works in policy for rural development.

Bascombe’s daily work involves managing GDPRD’s website and social media platforms and writing and editing articles on agricultural issues. He is clearly in his element.

“Agriculture is a passion for me. I love writing about it and blogging and using social media,” he says. “Agriculture is extremely important, simply because we all need to eat. If I get to promote something that is as crucial as this, then I think I will have a happy life.” ■



ICTs increasingly attract youth to engage in agricultural enterprises.

STORY 18

New skills open doors for agricultural journalist

Increased Web 2.0 and social media skills have boosted a young journalist's professional reputation in Burkina Faso. As a result, he has been commissioned by two rural development organisations to help them with communications projects.

As an agricultural journalist, Inoussa Maiga has always been deeply interested in issues of agricultural and rural development, including food security, land access, sustainable fisheries and traditional knowledge.

He is president of the Association of Agricultural Journalists and Communicators (ABJCA) in his

native Burkina Faso. And on his blog he lists the use of ICTs for agriculture as one of his main interests. So in October 2013, Inoussa was delighted to be invited to attend a Web 2.0 LO course offered by CTA. Little did he know at the time that this opportunity would open other doors in his career.



© Inoussa Maiga

Inoussa Maiga (middle) helped to develop a communication strategy for the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA).

“As a journalist I had already been using Web 2.0 and social media to some extent for my work, but not in a very organised manner,” he said. “The training I received helped me to improve the way I used blogs, Facebook and Twitter and showed me how I could make greater use of them for agricultural and rural development.”

Not long afterwards, the young journalist – who worked as a freelancer, contributing to publications that included CTA’s *Spore* magazine – received an unexpected call. He was contacted by a Canadian NGO, Farm Radio International and asked to prepare a practical guide for community radio journalists on its behalf. The eight-page publication would be designed to help radio journalists to find useful and reliable information about agriculture on the internet.

Inoussa is in no doubt that his new skills played a role in helping him to get the contract.

“That commission was partly due to the training I had received,” he said. “It was as a result of my social network pages and my updated profile on LinkedIn that caught their attention.”

The radio guide is now ready for publication and is due to be made available online later in 2014. In the meantime, Inoussa has been commissioned by the Belgium-based Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA), a platform of NGOs that documents the development and environmental impacts of EU-ACP (European Union - African, Caribbean and Pacific) fisheries’ regulations on small-scale fishing communities. This time, the request was for help in developing a communications strategy.

Inoussa took up the challenge and travelled to Rome in June 2014 to present his ideas to CFFA about how to improve the organisation’s visibility, using social media platforms and other channels. The following month he went to Kenya to take part in the finals of the CTA YoBloCo contest. One of 12 finalists, Inoussa won the prize for best blog on family farming.

Earlier this year, Inoussa launched a small media agency called MEDIAPROD, producing agricultural news and videos, as well as social media training for clients such as rural community radio stations. He is full of plans for the future, and most of them involve harnessing ICTs to improve coverage of the issues of agricultural and rural development about which he cares so deeply.

In March 2015, together with the Association of Agricultural Journalists and Communicators (which he heads) Inoussa is planning to attend the Festival of Documentary Films on Food and Agriculture. The event will be held in Ouagadougou and Inoussa is busy exploring how to use social media to attract the interest of young people.

“Mobilising youth is going to be very important for this event as they are a priority target audience,” said Inoussa. “I can’t think of a better way of reaching them than using social media.” ■

▶ Further reading

CTA publications

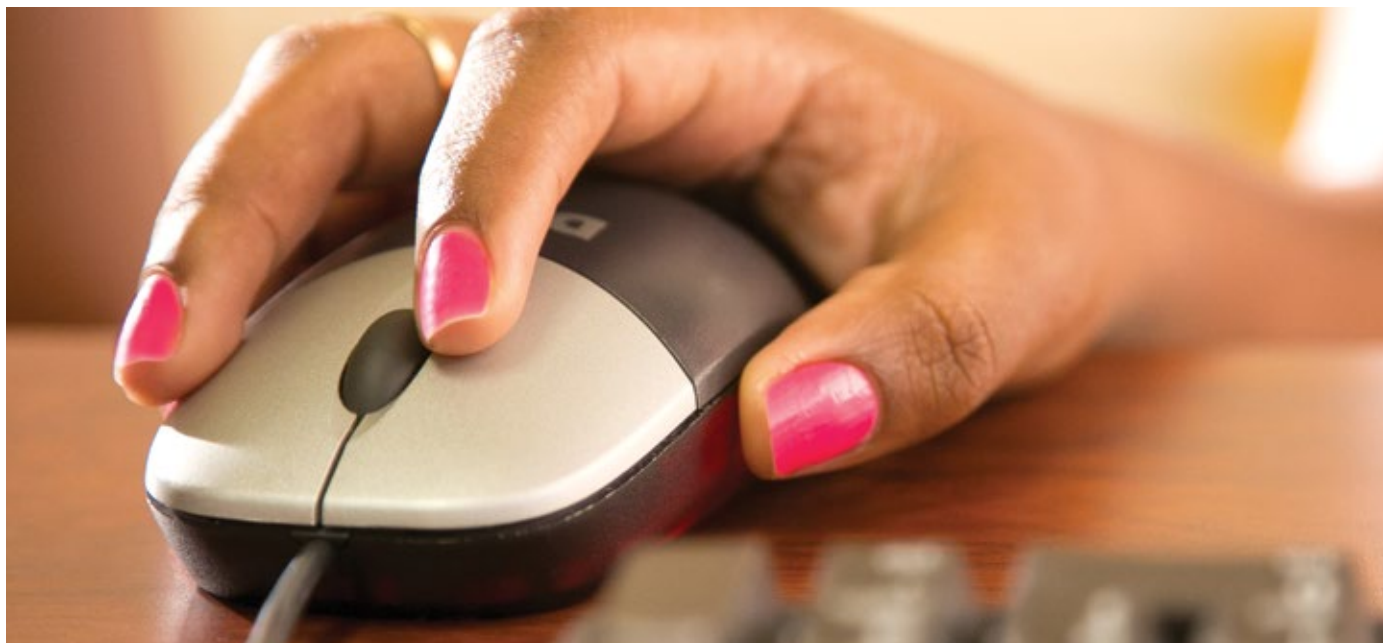
- CTA Youth Strategy 2013 – 2017. 2014.
<http://bit.ly/youthstrategy-cta>
- Emerging voices in ICT and agriculture: Shaping the future of ACP rural development using ICTs. 2014.
<http://bit.ly/1I3CmFy>
- ICTs for agriculture - Making it happen. Series: Policy Pointers. 2014.
<http://bit.ly/1IJmm1n>
- ICTUpdate magazine. Special 50th issue. August 2009.
[http://ictupdate.cta.int/\(issue\)/50](http://ictupdate.cta.int/(issue)/50)
- ICTUpdate magazine. Issue no. 39 on Web 2.0. October 2007.
[http://ictupdate.cta.int/\(issue\)/39](http://ictupdate.cta.int/(issue)/39)

CTA-FAO-IFAD co-publication

- Youth and agriculture: Key challenges and concrete solutions. 2014.
<http://bit.ly/1JMwsgq>

Other publications

- Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business. Qualman E. 2012.
<http://goo.gl/nS0coh>
- WSIS Stocktaking: Success Stories 2013. International Telecommunication Union (ITU). 2013
<http://goo.gl/K2upfU>



Information can be shared more easily, efficiently and at a lower cost.

For more information

.....

1. A platform for rural policy development

Agricultural Platform in Madagascar:

www.agriculture-madagascar.net

Farming & Technology for Africa: <http://123fta.com>

Youth for Agricultural Development:

<http://jeuneagrimadagascar.org>

Blog: <http://blog.agriculture-madagascar.net>

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/nuyb3tw>

2. Uncovering inspirational solutions

Global Youth Innovation Network:

<http://gyincameroon.blogspot.nl>

Protège QV: <http://tinyurl.com/n5yz25w>

YPARD-Cameroon: www.ypard.net

Blog: <http://agritech2.blogspot.nl>

3. Information is power for small-scale farmers

Pan African Farmers Organisation:

<http://pafo-africa.org>

Regional Platform of Central African Farmers

Organisations: <http://infopropac.org>

Slideshare: www.slideshare.net/propac

Blog: <http://propac.blogspot.com>

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/plkfxd3>

Twitter: @PROPACinfos

YouTube: <http://tinyurl.com/pgn7ghp>

4. Making the voice of producers heard

Do Agric: www.one.org/doagric

Farmers Radio Poll: <http://tinyurl.com/lvyxfb7>

Blogs:

www.agrichampions.wordpress.com

www.graduatefarmers.wordpress.com

www.youthinagribusiness.wordpress.com

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/pq397rw>

5. Social media for advocacy

Women of Uganda Network: www.wougnet.org

Blogs:

<http://tinyurl.com/kerskub>

<http://tinyurl.com/p74umm8>

6. Blogging for farmers

Busoga Rural Open Source Development Initiative:

www.brosdi.or.ug

Collecting and Exchange of Local Agricultural

Content: www.celac.or.ug

Blog: <http://celac.wordpress.com>

7. Linking players in the beekeeping value chain

Ulule: www.ulule.com

Blog: www.beemadagascar.wordpress.com

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/oxdfes3>

8. From geographical indications to cocoa disease

Ghana Cocoa Board: www.cocobod.gh

9. Linking communities and value chains

Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/phlf2op>

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/ppobaw2>

Twitter: @rob_kib

10. Samoan tradition meets the age of the internet

Women in Business Development Inc:

www.womeninbusiness.ws

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/ng4rdjr>

Twitter: @WIBDI_Samoa

YouTube: <http://tinyurl.com/npot9ns>

11. Online counselling for rural youth

National Council of Women in Madagascar:

<http://tinyurl.com/kypgawe>

Blogs:

<http://tinyurl.com/mxl6exn>

<http://tinyurl.com/n696bzd>

Facebook:

<http://tinyurl.com/myp85n2>

<http://tinyurl.com/pvo5va3>

12. A new look for agriculture

Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture: www.ruforum.org
Blog: <http://ruforum.wordpress.com>
Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/oh7vlxt>
Twitter: @ruforumsec
YouTube: <http://tinyurl.com/oul47kn>

13. ICTs pay off for farmers and telecentres

Rwanda Telecentre Network: <http://rtn.rw>
Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/ndwwgsh>

14. New horizons for youth in agriculture

Actions pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable: www.aced-benin.org/en
Blog: <http://agrodevbenin.wordpress.com>
Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/oe2vz9v>
Twitter: @acedbenin

15. Extending community reach for telecentres and radio stations

Kenya Telecentre Network:
<http://tinyurl.com/kohu79b>
Pixelskenya: www.pixelskenya.com

16. Lower costs, better service

Cabinet de consultation agricole FENCO:
<http://tinyurl.com/klwu9nf>
Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/qy3dxzp>

17. Fighting stereotypes

Global Donor Platform for Rural Development: <http://tinyurl.com/konwr2m>
New Agriculturist: <http://tinyurl.com/o8du5lh>
Spore: <http://spore.cta.int>
Tech4agri: <http://tech4agri.com>
Young Professionals for Agricultural Development: www.ypard.net
Young Professionals in Local Development: www.ypld.org
Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/pgejvfu>
Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/pc3qmdh>

18. New skills open doors for agricultural journalist

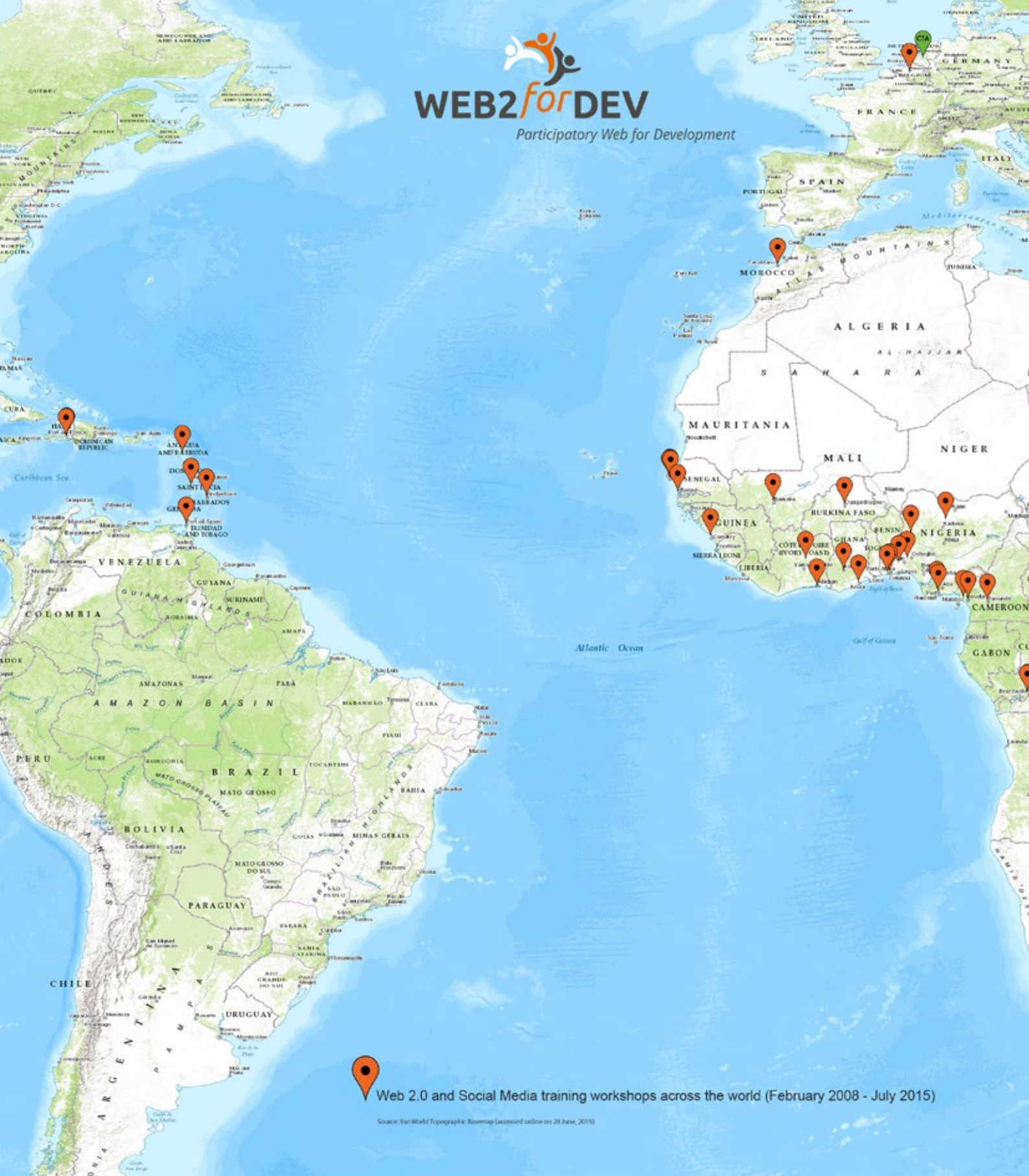
Association burkinabè des journalistes et communicateurs agricoles:
<http://abjca.wordpress.com>
Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements:
<http://tinyurl.com/mczz24a>
Farm Radio International: www.farmradio.org
YoBloCo 2014 prize winners:
<http://tinyurl.com/m8owp7x>
Blog: <http://tinyurl.com/n4slsxe>
Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/ow2mnxq>
Twitter: @MaigaInou





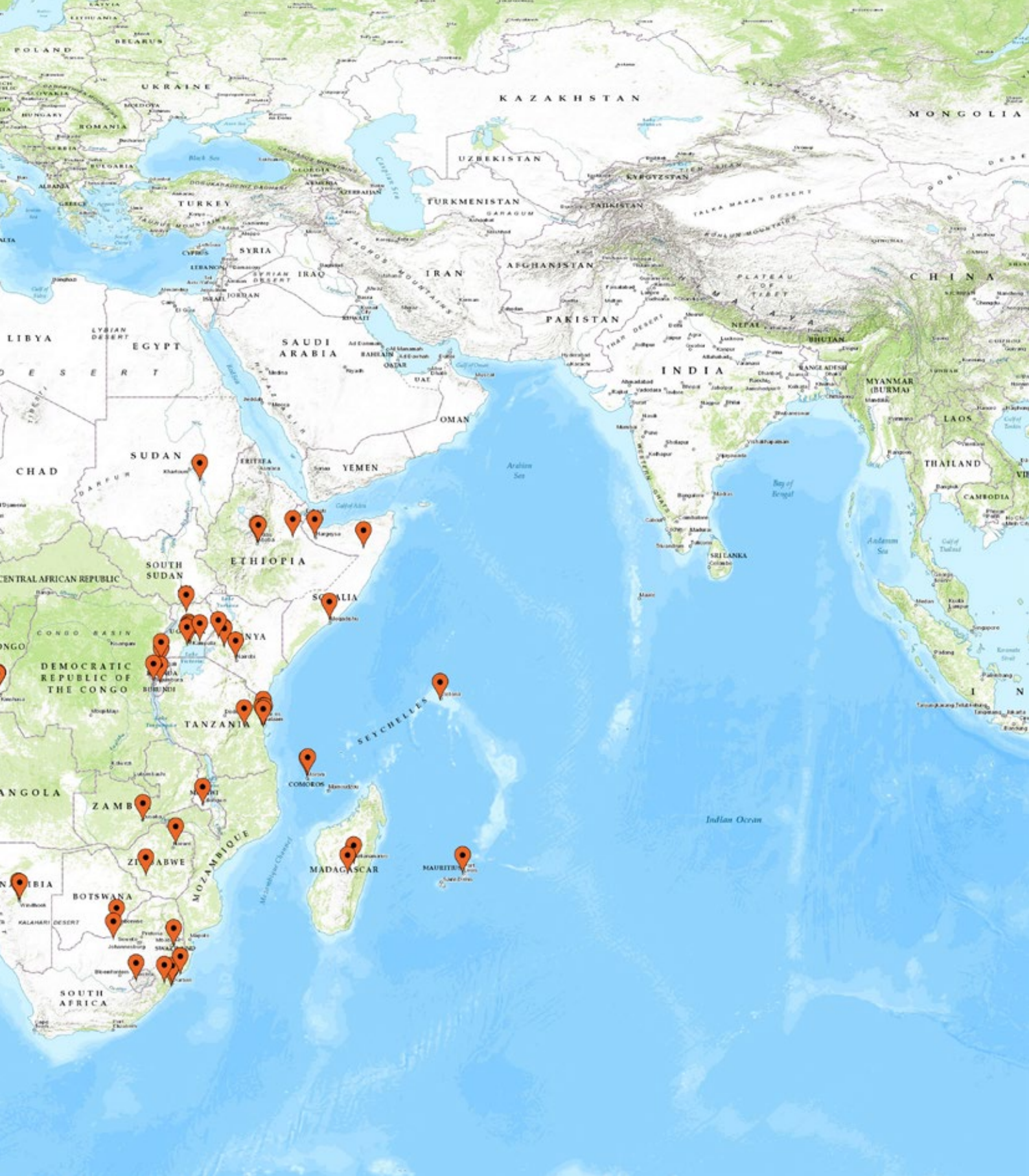
WEB2forDEV

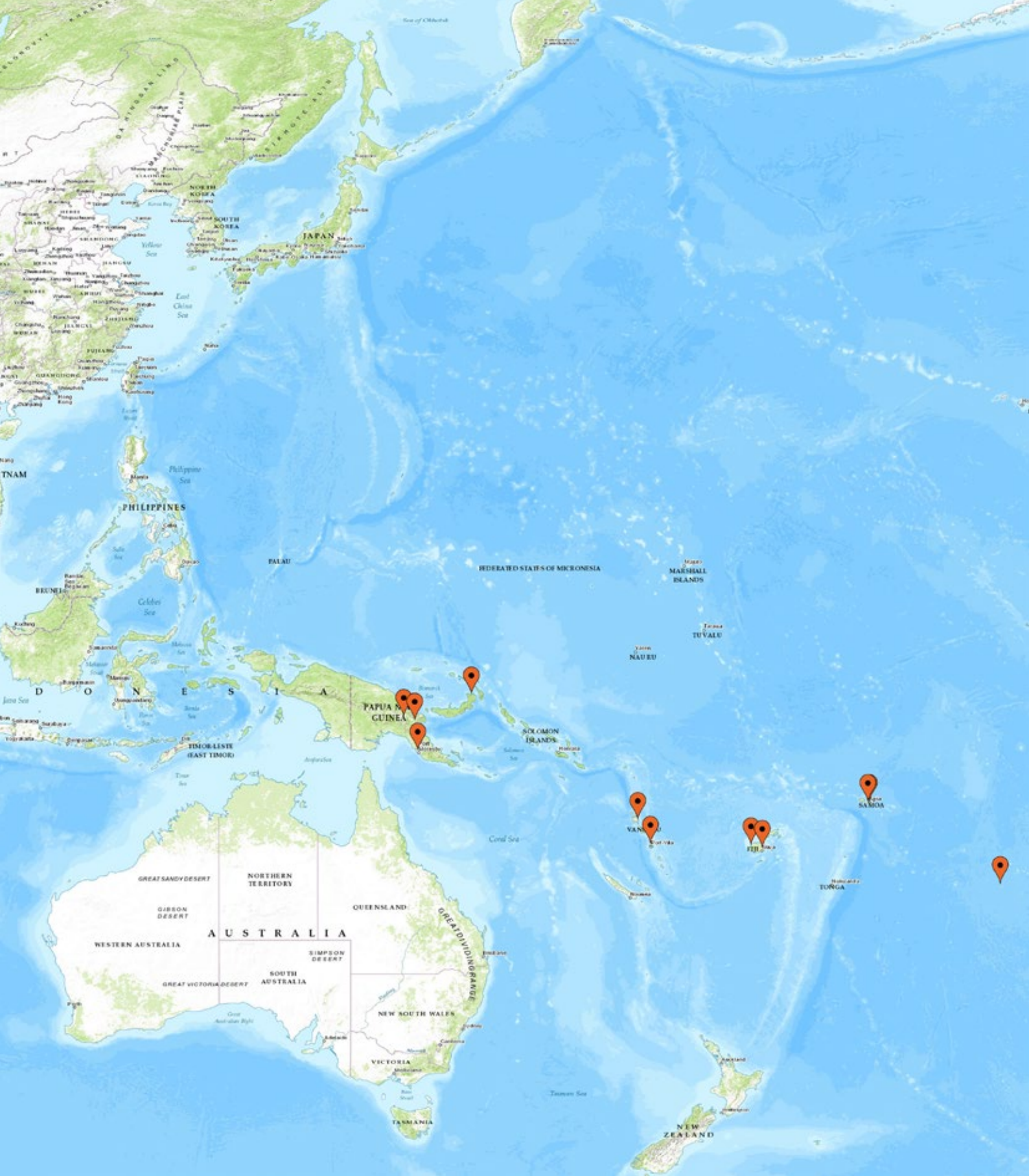
Participatory Web for Development



Web 2.0 and Social Media training workshops across the world (February 2008 - July 2015)

Source: FunWorld Topographic Basemap (accessed online on 28 June, 2015)







The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) is a joint international institution of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union (EU). Its mission is to advance food and nutritional security, increase prosperity and encourage sound natural resource management in ACP countries. It provides access to information and knowledge, facilitates policy dialogue and strengthens the capacity of agricultural and rural development institutions and communities. CTA operates under the framework of the Cotonou Agreement and is funded by the EU.



Participatory Web 2.0 for development, or Web2forDev, uses interactive web tools to help people in the development sector to improve information sharing and to work together to produce knowledge. These tools allow development actors to interact with their peers and other stakeholders, build strong networks, gain access to information, produce and publish their own content and redistribute material released by others. Social media, which build on Web 2.0 applications, are also at the core of Web2forDev and help communities of practice and networks to thrive. Since 2006, CTA has been supporting the widespread adoption and institutionalisation of Web 2.0 and social media in order to help its partners influence agricultural and rural development policy processes and value chain development.



For more information on CTA, visit www.cta.int

For more information on the Web2forDev programme, visit www.web2fordev.net



Agriculture in a time of digital revolution



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